

HOPE IN AN UPSIDE-DOWN WORLD, PART 4

Scripture used: [Philippians 1:20b \(NLT\)](#)

OVERVIEW

Pastor Hurmon reflected on this past week, with the biggest hurricane in a century (Hurricane Laura) hitting his home state of Louisiana and causing widespread damage, and renewed racial conflict after the shooting of Jacob Blake in Kenosha, Wisconsin and the ensuing protest, civil unrest, and violence. All this comes on top of the extended coronavirus pandemic and the stresses of job losses, financial stress, health and family challenges, and grief that have impacted all of us in one form or another. To top it off, the Bay Area wildfires have impacted thousands. Yet, there is hope in this upside down world, and God continues to work through His people to be instruments of hope. NBCC announced a fire relief fund that gives our community an opportunity to come alongside Twin Lakes Church, a church providing direct relief in the Santa Cruz area. Pastor Hurmon recently shared a message with Twin Lakes regarding God's heart for racial justice, which led to many expressions of genuine solidarity, hearts being opened, and actions toward positive change. In a time of great challenges, God is bringing churches together and using His people everywhere to the true hope found in God alone.

Our Scripture today truly contains words of revelation. The key point is that as we honor God in all circumstances, God's love and presence truly is with us no matter how overwhelmed or "in the basement" we feel. This is a message for all of us who feel like we are at the end of our strength.

KEY POINTS

- 1) In our Scripture, Paul's faith is strong but he is wrestling with powerful emotions. He is grappling with grief, trauma, depression; and feeling overwhelmed. He longs for death to finally find rest and peace, but tells the community of early Christians in Philippi that it's "better that I continue to live for your sake." If we feel overwhelmed and want to quit, we're not alone! It's a human response to unimaginable challenges.
- 2) One form of quitting is going into the "basement of despair." [1 Kings 19:4](#) tells us the story of Elijah going alone in the wilderness; having had enough of life; and asking the Lord to take his life. How do we survive being in the basement of despair?
- 3) We are reminded that our first source of hope is that we have the privilege of calling out to God. In [1 Kings 19:5-6](#), we learn from Elijah basic rhythms of self-care. We need to allow ourselves extra time to rest and choose for nourishing food. We need to realize we cannot control the uncontrollable. We will discover that God has placed angels in our lives, those who are messengers of God's love and care. We need to be open and responsive to all the ways that God reaches out to us and reminds us there is hope.
- 4) Even as we are grateful for natural provision, we also remember we have access to the supernatural. God is real and is a source of power and comfort in our lives. We not only need to catch our breath, we need to catch God's breath in our lives. The breath of God is the one that gives life ([Genesis 2:7](#)) and allows us to be filled with His Spirit, and to be empowered to have hope and to do what God has called us to do.
- 5) Small choices can help us catch God's breath. We can update our playlists and include songs of worship and hymns that will penetrate our soul. We should spend time in Scripture each day to remember God's promises of love and care for us. Don't you dare quit - you have to trust and hold on!

DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** - What has made you feel the most overwhelmed this year? Have there been moments you have felt like you are "in the basement" of despair? If God has helped you "out of the basement", share with others what helped you. If you are "in the basement" right now, take the step of courage to share honestly.
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** - In [Philippians 1](#), we encounter the reality that Paul can simultaneously be filled with faith and hope and also in circumstances that easily overwhelm (being imprisoned and chained to a Roman guard around the clock). Similarly, Elijah in [1 Kings 18-19](#) goes from exercising great faith to despairing for his life. Do we have the kind of relationship with God that allows us to be honest with our emotions? How have we experienced God meeting us in our emotions and allowing us to move forward?

- 3) **DO** - Consider how we can be exercising self-care in this season. If we are in crisis, make sure we are reaching out for help. We shared the following suicide crisis line: 800-273-8255. Even as we experience God's comfort through others in this season, let us also consider how we might be angels to others.